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THRASH METAL

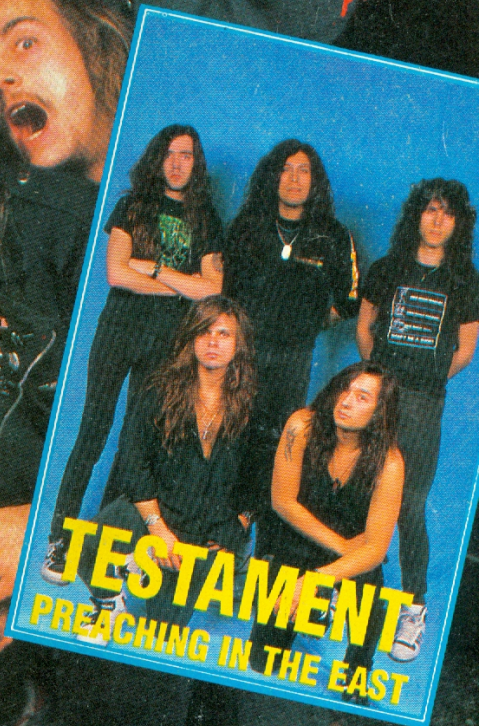
ANTHRAX
THE ART OF PERSISTANCE

ANNIHILATOR
DIVINE DESTRUCTION

AGONY COLUMN
CAN YOU FEEL THE PAIN

MOTORHEAD
INDUCTED INTO THRASH METAL HALL OF FAME
THE LOS ANGELES SCENE
FROM THE BELLY OF THE WHALE

EXODUS
PREPARE FOR IMPACT



PLUS BUZZCOCKS • DEFIANCE • REST IN PIECES AND MORE!



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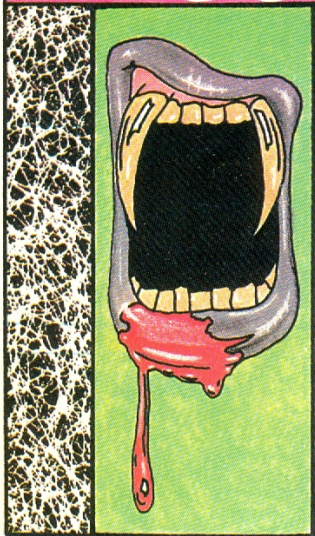
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POST

MORTEM



SOME PEOPLE GOT A LOT OF NERVE!

What the hell is wrong with you shitheads? How's about a little hardcore in EVERY issue, alright? All your last issue had about hardcore and punk was a skimpy one page article about D.O.A. I know the mag is called THRASH METAL, but gimme a break. Your magazine is one of only a few publications that prints about hardcore bands. I didn't buy a subscription to this magazine to read about these f**kin' long-haired bastards who need directions on how to wipe their ass. So give me my money's worth. PLEASE!

Phil
Leesport, PA

EVER HEARD OF RAID?

ROACHES ARE EATING THE STICKY STUFF OFF THE TAPE ON MY POSTERS!!!! No wonder they keep falling down! I just rented a sleeping room at my cousin's house a few days ago. SHE'S GOT BUGS! I'm moving out. I want my rent money back, and if those roaches eat holes in my Metallica posters, I'm gonna make my cousin reimburse me! GROSS! I HEAR THEM GNAWING! OH, IT'S A BIG BLACK WATERBUG! AND IT'S BEHIND MY FAVORITE METALLICA POSTER! I WANT MY MOMMY!!!

4

Well, what I was going to say before I heard that bug, is that this magazine slays, shreds and rips, but the "#1 Anti-Anthrax Fan" can F**K-OFF-AND-DIE!! YOU "GET OUTTA THRASH"!!! No, they were not (pardon the pun) trying to create a "rap/thrash crossover," they just released "I'm The Man" for fun. They happen to LIKE rap, okay? Personally I hate rap, but everyone's entitled to his/her own opinion. I also think the guys in Anthrax are cute! (Get your d**k outta that hand, you asthmatic bastard!) Dave Lombardo and Kerry King are also babes.

Second of all, "Eric of Edmonton, Alta" can stick his d**k up his nose and rotate it! I don't know about Edmonton, man, but the punks and thrashers live in perfect harmony here in Dayton! I used to be a punk, but now I'm a thrasher! One side of my hair is shaved and the rest of it is long, unruly locks. I like Agnostic Front, Cro-Mags, Suicidal Tendencies, M.O.D., Overkill, Death Angel, Metallica, Vio-lence and Sepultura (by the way, when will we get a centerfold of the "jungle boys?"). You must have HUA (police term: "Head Up Ass")! Some of my best friends have blue hair or hair covering their face. WE ALL LOVE THE SEX PISTOLS! Come to Dayton and get some enlightenment. Damn these bugs! One's behind my stereo. No! SHEEIT!

Melissa Dawn

"The Metal Mutt" Miracle

P.S. One is crawling on my Overkill album! I hope they don't get my Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles cereal—then I'd be pissed!

THRASH TILL YOU DIE!

This letter is put out to send a message to the f**kin' loser poseurs. G N'R you need a lot of help. Give me a break. You call yourself heavy metal or thrash, then you come out with "Patience."

The real thrash metal bands are Slayer. Let me tell you something about Slayer—listen to that drummer Dave Lombardo. The double bass is so f**kin' awesome. I think he's the best drummer. Slayer will kick ass forever. Whiplash rules, too. They're really thrashy. All you serious thrash headbangers should give them a chance.

Overkill rules. Their bass player D.D. Verni is so f**kin' awesome. I play bass in my band and I can't come close to playin' that kind of shit. Those thrash bands are my favorite. And one more, which is sort of punky thrash—Excel. They kick the livin' shit out of me! Listen to *Jokes On You* and let it kill yourself. I will be a thrasher forever 'cause thrash rules.

A Sic Headbanger,
T.A.C.
Poughkeepsie, NY

WHEN BIG JIM SPEAKS, WE LISTEN!

Hey dudes, you all got a killer mag going here, but you're also blowing it. All we ever see is Metallica, Anthrax and the rest of the thrash veterans. That's cool and all, but try throwing in some Guillotine. They totally rip hard. It would be decent if you printed some Suicidal and Vio-lence, Annihilator,



PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE

Minor Threat and Exploited. OK, also no more bullshit about punks and thrashers. We can all get along. I've got a hawk and I dig Slayer. Just remember S.O.D. United Forces.

Big Jim
Lowell, Oregon

LISTEN UP, Y'ALL!

I want to clear a few things up here. When people say "he's from Tennessee," chewing tobacco and horse patties enter your mind. Well stop it. There a quite a few thrash fans here and even less hardcore fans, but I give a f**k about what you think because I'm a thrash monster as we like to be known. Hopefully, more bands like Intruder will climb deep out of the underground. I have enough problems of my own, so death to country, death to poseurs and death to people who don't like it. I give a rat's ass what you think. If you don't like it, well that's tough. Speak English or die.

John Fletcher
Chattanooga, TN

FUTURE THRASH METAL WRITER

This mag rules! This is the first mag that deals with the raw, talented bands that don't get enough recognition!

I am a music writer for my high school paper and I don't want to rehash the same old bands that everyone knows everything about. I never cover poseur bands anyway! So whenever I can get hold of a copy of your mag, I use it as a reference (THRASH METAL is a hard mag to get in my town).

Also, I would love to see a huge layout on my fave band, SANCTUARY! Warrel, Lenny, Sean, Dave and Jim are the best!

All long-haired, headbangin' guys write me! Send a photo if possible. Also, if you are in a band, let me know. 'Cause I do a lot of stuff in my reviews on unsigned bands! Underground bands are a main staple of the metal scene.

THRASH METAL, keep up the good work! One day my stories will be



PHOTO BY NICK CHARLES

seen on your pages. At least that is my dream.

THRASH METAL RULES!

Wendy Jasper
P.O. Box 1522
Huntsville, TX 77340

IF IT'S NOT ONE THING, IT'S ANOTHER

What the hell's goin' on with all the criticism of this or that. Just about every letter printed in you mag is coming down on someone or another. It can't be helped when some ignorant fool writes in claiming that thrash is the armpit of music. F**k these people!! I agree with telling these people off. But in my opinion there's far too much bashing of a band just because this individual who's writing doesn't like their music. Listen, if you don't like it, don't listen to it! Isn't that what we've been trying to tell our parents and the P.M.R.C.? Just because some guy gets a letter printed in Circus or some other lame mag saying Motley Crue rules, why does there have to be this outpour of letters saying Motley Crue sucks? (By the way, I'm not a big Crue fan, I'm just using them as an example.) The reason I listen to thrash is because there was never any given mold you had to fit. No one (or so it used to be) got down on anyone. Nowadays if you don't listen to one band or another you're a wimp. Give me a break.

Another thing, just because a band sells more than 100 copies of their album, doesn't mean they've sold out. What's wrong with selling albums? Personally, I like hearing about when a band's going to tour and such. Before our music was recognized you

all complained that you never heard about concerts or you couldn't find the tapes you wanted. And now that you can, you still complain. Stop f**king whining!!

Ron Rohrback
8405 Franklin Road
Oklahoma 73071
P.S. Anything to say? Good or bad, go ahead and write.

MOSH IT UP WITH A FRIEND

You've got a killer mag! I'm used to seeing (mostly) poseurs in guitar magazines. I'll admit I like everything but opera, rap and country (excuse me while I puke)... Anyway, I'm really into metal, hardcore and punk. In my opinion (and I understand if people disagree), hardcore is a metal and punk mix. I am currently into Coroner, Testament, Death Angel, Metallica, S.T., Ministry and the list goes on for a while. I totally dislike satanic shit, but if you're into it, well... it's your taste.

I like this music most because it's honest. It's no f**king cover-up for bad things. It's emotional! This rap sucks shit. It's a bunch of fairy crap and all they do is put each other down. HARD SHIT RULES. It's for friends. I'm sick of assholes who push each other around. I look at moshing for fun. If you bust your face open in a pit, you had fun! Nobody needs some ass-f**k throwing shit or beating the crap out of you 'cause he's hyped up from too much sugar or something. Hee, sugar—right! I say this 'cause I was jumped (alone) by 5 f**k-heads who are regretting their mistake.

Diminished 7th Arpeggio RULEZ
Rochester, NY

DEFIANCE INTO THE VOID



By Daina Darzin

Bay Area thrashniks Defiance have come a long way since their debut gig opening for Legacy (now better-known as Testament) in early 1986. By 1988 the band had landed a worldwide record deal with Roadracer, largely on the strength of their *Hypothermia* demo, and soon released their debut LP, *Product Of Society*. But something was amiss. The album, produced by Annihilator's Jeff Waters, was loaded with terrifying riffs and great songs, but didn't quite manage to capture what Defiance was made of. For their next

release, the band parted ways with Waters and their lead singer, a bold move for any group that has established a sizable following.

But as their new elpee *Void Terra Firma* demonstrates time and time again, they made the right move. Vocalist Steev Esquivel was recruited from Laughing Dead, another local band, and the record was produced by John Cuniberti, who had already manned the boards for discs by Forbidden, Violence and Xentrix. The current line-up—Steev, guitarists Doug Harrington and Jim Adams, bassist Mike Kaufman and drummer Matt Van Der Ende—spent the bulk of

their summer vacation unleashing the new material on the road here in the states, and a European tour with Annihilator is currently underway.

THRASH: What made you decide to use John Cuniberti for the new album?

MIKE: We wanted a different tone for this album. The first album was a little too conservative for our taste. It's really good—everything's clean and it came out good and everything—but the overall guitar crunch wasn't exactly what we wanted. John Cuniberti did Violence and Forbidden. I was really impressed with those albums so we decided to give him a shot. We talked

to him and he said he was interested...

How did you hook up with Steev?

He was singing for Laughing Dead, and those guys happen to be very good friends of ours. We went down and checked them out at a few practices and we saw Steev singing with them, and we were really impressed with him. We thought he was a great singer, and especially a really good frontman. We started partying with him a little bit, going out, doing things and he was telling us how unhappy he was with Laughing Dead. He didn't like the way the songs were structured. It really limited what he wanted to do as far as the way he wrote songs and everything. We sort of expressed the fact that we were looking for another singer, and that's pretty much how the whole idea came about. There were some personal problems with our first singer. He's still a really good friend of ours, but what we needed was somebody who was really dedicated. Instrumentally, the four of us were so dedicated, and Ken wasn't exactly sure what he wanted to do. He was a little bit mixed up. After talking with Steev a few times, we felt that he was totally a dedicated musician and that if he joined the band, he would just live Defiance. And that's the way it's been.

How have the shows with this line-up been going?

Every show has gone great. Our whole stage appearance is much better than it was on the first album. The crowd response is great, and everybody is really happy with the line-up. Defiance is going to stay this way for a long time.

What's the vibe like in the Bay Area these days? Is it really competitive?

It's kind of weird, 'cause there is a lot of competition. I could really tell after going out on the road that the scene is so much different in other areas. There's so many original bands around here, whereas in other areas you've got bands playing covers and stuff like that. Around here, the competition is incredible. There's so many bands! You can look in the paper and four or five days a week you can go to a thrash show.

Do you prefer playing to a

hometown crowd instead of...

I love playing here. I like it when all my friends are there. But it gets a little boring. You can't do it every day. When we play Vancouver, it's so much different, 'cause I'm used to seeing a big circle of people lookin' like they're killing each other! We go up to Vancouver and it's much different. People are headbanging, and they clap after songs and scream and yell. There's no Circle Of Death or anything. It's quite a bit of different, but I like it.

How is it that you ended up covering Iron Maiden's "Killers" on the new record?

Well, we wanted to do a copy on the album, and Iron Maiden has always been one of my favorite bands from years and years ago. We used to do a bunch of Iron Maiden copies, and that was one of them. We put it in the closet for about a year-and-a-half, and then we just said "What the f**k? Let's bring it out." If you've listened to the song, we play quite a bit differently than Iron Maiden.

To say the least!

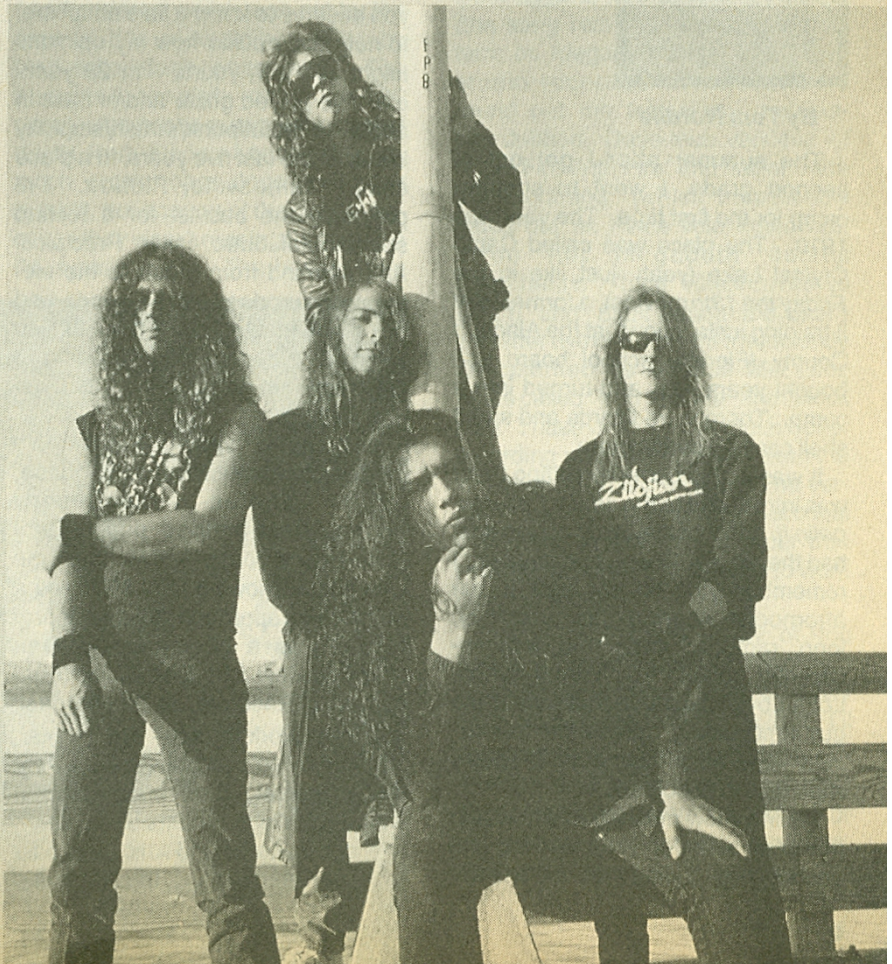
Yeah. We have to thank John a little bit on that one. We went into the studio and that was the last song we recorded, and we went to play it and we played it just like Iron Maiden. John was all "Hey man, this doesn't sound like you guys at all." And he was right. It didn't. It sounded like Iron Maiden. So he suggested that we crunch it out and maybe change a couple of parts a little bit but basically do the same song, and that's what we did. It ended up coming out great.

Do you continue to write new material?

As a matter of fact, just as you called my guitar player and I were sitting here looking on a new song. We have three brand new songs so far.

What's next for Defiance?

Well, we're taking it one step at a time. The way I'm looking at it is right now I want to get this tour done, and then in August and September we're planning on touring in Europe with Annihilator. After that, I want to come back right away and start working on the next album. ★



RECORDS

By Tom Nordlie

The summer after I got out of second grade, I went to summer camp for the first time. The year was 1970. The place was called Camp Crystal Lake (yeah, just like in the *Friday the 13th* movies), a former WW II training installation that the Alachua County (Florida) school board had bought years later and turned into a camp. There were lizards and spent shell casings everywhere.

It was in this carefree setting that I was introduced to the album *Led Zepelin II*. Most of the camp counselors had the album—it was real popular. I remember lying on my bunk in the afternoons hearing this unearthly, long, rambling song that was apparently called "Ya Wanna Whole Lotta Love", because that's what the guy kept yelping, right before that circular-saw noise came in (Pagey's slide guitar, of course).

I didn't know much, but I knew that that song sounded very, very big and uncontrolled. I liked that. Lo and be-



PHOTO BY ALEX SOLCA/PHOTOFEATURES

hold, here it is 20 years later and I'm still looking for (hell, living for) records that are intimidating. In case you didn't notice, I'm the new *THRASH* review columnist taking over for Dynomite Dave Sprague, who'll continue to write feature stores.

Before we get to the action, I figure you deserve to know a little about me, to help you decide how my opinions might jibe with yours. I'm 28 years old. I've played guitar and/or bass in about 14 metal/punk/thrash/stupidity bands in the last five years, in a place called Gainesville, Florida. I'm presently the bassist for a techno speedmetal outfit called Precipice. All I demand from music is the element of surprise, catchy songs and the sense that the players are thrilled to death to do what they're doing. I dig Megadeth and Johnny Cash and Jimi Hendrix.

With those thoughts in mind, it's high time to mention **Sylvia Juncosa**, a Los Angeles-based desert/ocean/forest-minded psychmetal guitarist who consistently amazes me with her freeflowing lead style and a songwriting approach that's as unpredictable as a good fever-dream. Sylvia's latest LP, *One Thing* (Fundamental Records), is her hardest, grimmest work to date. The opener, "One in Three", addresses rape from the viewpoint of an angry, scared woman, and drives home its message with riffs that wind and whip like Cadillacs careening off the freeway.

Speaking of freeways, "Under the Freeway" is a quietly creepy tune about people dropping out of life, a theme that runs through most of the album. Though Sylvia's getting tired of the "gee whiz, a girl who can really rock and write and play lead and isn't some contrived bimbo" label, it bears repeating here. Sylvia rules.

Speaking of underrated Los Angelinos, how 'bout **Dark Angel**, who're blessed with: (A) One of the very few ultra-thrash drummers (Gene "The Hog" Hoglan) whose timing is so precise that he can swing even at the highest speeds, and (B) One of the more down-to-earth frontmen in the genre, newcomer Ron Rinehart. *Live Scars* (Combat) is a five-song EP documenting last year's tour for DA's third album, *Leave Scars*. If you'll remember, Rinehart debuted on that platter, and guitarist Brett Erikson (ex-Viking) had only joined the band when the *tour* started up. So it was a gutsy move for these guys to record live so soon, and it's a tribute to their musicianship that *Live Scars* is so tight and dense. Personally, I'd like a few more songs (the CD version has eight, including a cover of Fear's antisocial rallying cry "I Don't Care About You"), and I think it's a shame that Rinehart's positive, you-are-all-worthwhile-people stage raps don't appear here. Anyway, for dedication and conscience, Dark Angel received this month's **SERIAL KILLER** award.

What with the Seattle grunge-band contingent waist-deep in early '70's inspiration, it's not surprising that **Tad** finally got around to re-interpreting Ted Nugent and the Amboy Dukes. The six tunes on *Salt Lick* (Sub-Pop) recall the Nuge more in spirit than substance—Tad (like Ted) sound like they enjoy skinning rabbits and play a number called "Hibernation", but the rusty, rubbery crash of Tad's music points back to Killing Joke, Die Kreuzen and Scratch Acid, all '80's outfits. Besides, Tad's "Hibernation" has words (unlike Ted's), not that you can figure any of 'em out. The best self-description of this EP is in "High on the Hog", which goes "My girl taught me to drink/My girl taught me to smoke/My girl taught me to BLLARGGHAALLLAALKK." The last songs on each side, "Wood Goblins" and "Potlatch", provide the most visceral, octave-leaping thrills, but too much of this thing sounds like the same roadkilled riff, sprawling across different songs.

There's a funny argument going on in my house about the new live set from Boston's ever-durable **Gang Green**, *Can't LIVE Without It* (Roadracer). My roommates have been into 'em since the *This Is Boston, Not LA* compilation album ('81), back when GG were stoopid punk-rock through-and-through. I didn't hear 'em until '87 and the *You Got It* album, which my roomies view as the big plunge into speed-metaldom.

Consequently, I enjoy *Can't LIVE* and my buds don't—it's a tight, fast career overview, with aggro versions of "Alcohol" and "Let's Drink Some Beer" which I find surprisingly vital. The roommates bitch about the double-bass drums and faster-than-the-original tempos. Just goes to show how yer point of view on a band is influenced by the career status of said band when you discover 'em. Thumbs up, except for the snoozoid, Judas Priesty cover of 'Til Tuesday's "Voices Carry", a joke that started losing value as soon as the original version went off the radio playlists.

Metallica freaks craving old stuff with Dave Mustaine will be pleased and confused by the single-LP bootleg *...Let God Sort 'em Out* (After Hours Records). For starters, the album cover shows James, Lars, Kirk and Jason standing on a busy street in Japan, but most of the material comes from a live performance in San Francisco in '83—eight tunes that wound up on *Kill 'Em All*, except that here you get 'em in the shape they were in for the legendary *No Life 'til Leather* demo, which was out by the time of this recording, judging by Hetfield's stage comments. The audience consists of about 100 people, the sound quality is basic bad direct-from-mixing-board—that is, much vocals, bass drum and crash cymbal, not enough of the guitars because they were't running through the PA system much. The bassist here



PHOTO BY JOHN RICARD

might be Ron McGovney or Cliff Burton or "Not Me" from the *Family Circus* comics—you can't hear 'im. For the most part, the songs are loose and Hetfield has a tough time singing loud, hard and high-pitched enough as he plays guitar (makes you appreciate the fire-breathing hands/words coordination he's developed since then). Mustaine is wired and pretty much pin-point accurate, but doesn't do anything real different from his knitty *No Life* soloing. The tightest, most committed tune overall is "Motorbreath", and of special interest is "The Mechanix", based on a riff-pattern that evolved into "The Four Horsemen" with new lyrics and the slow stuff in the middle (the song remains in nearly-original form on Megadeth's first LP). Five studio-recorded demo numbers round out the festivities: raw-but-overdubbed, Dave-less versions of "Fight Fire With Fire" and half of "Ride the Lightning" (which inexplicably fades out as Kirk's solo heats up); three hot Megadeth demos ("Mechanix," "Last Rites/Loved to Death" and "Skull Beneath the Skin") the latter two of which are fraudulently represented as oddball Metallica tunes called "You and Me" and "Rock Me". These demos offer much better recording and mixing quality than the live stuff, as you'd expect. The verdict? *Let God* is a worthy historical document, and a fun reminder that even the greatest bands have to work up to godhood.

That's all for now. Any of you bands or record labels out there want to wing stuff my way, I'm at 5013 NW 16th Place, Gainesville FL, 32605. I'll consider anything that's seriously obnoxious and brain-hurting, whether it's a cheap-ass demo tape, album or CD; metal, thrash, punk, hardcore, noise, whatever. Surprise me. ★



Photo by Alex Sica/PhotoFeatures

like it. But their music is so interesting, I can't help but go to their shows. Besides, underneath it all, these guys—original three members, bassist Bill Gould, drummer Mike Borden, and keyboardist Roddy Bottum together now with guitarist Jim Martin and singer Mike Patton—can be really cool, too, each in his own very individual way.

"So, when do you want to do this interview?" Jim was on the phone, finally. "Tonight? It'll have to be late. I'll call you back." "Oh, great," I think, "now I get to sit around nervously and wait for the phone to ring again, maybe." But an hour later he was back. "How long will it take you to get to Hayward? Come to this pool hall...."

I got there at about 9:30 and Jim was playing pool with his younger brother, Paul. "OK. Follow me around and interview me." "It won't work." "Sure it will." So I go along for a while, and of course I'm not getting anywhere. "We're just going around and around," I complain. Paul says, "That's all you'll ever get out of Jim."

Jim Martin is legendary for being closed-mouthed, stubborn and uncooperative—for always doing everything in his own individual way no matter the consequences. But I wasn't going to let that stop me. Knowing him for some time helped, because I knew that underneath the extreme individualism beat the heart of a guy to whom family and friends are most important.

"All right Jim, Goddamnit," I glare at him. "You are going to sit down, sit still, and talk to me, one-on-one!" "Yeah," he said suspiciously, "how long you got?" "All night," I answer coolly, "if that's what it takes!" He considers, then relents, "OK. See that bar down the street? Go over there and wait for me. I'll be there in 10 minutes." Great, what if he doesn't show up? But in exactly 10 minutes, he's there. We order drinks, and I jump in; I'm determined I'm not going to let him off the hook easily now.

THRASH: I read an article once about the difficulties Hollywood has in casting musicians; they're such an odd and distinctive personality type that it's almost impossible to find an actor or actress

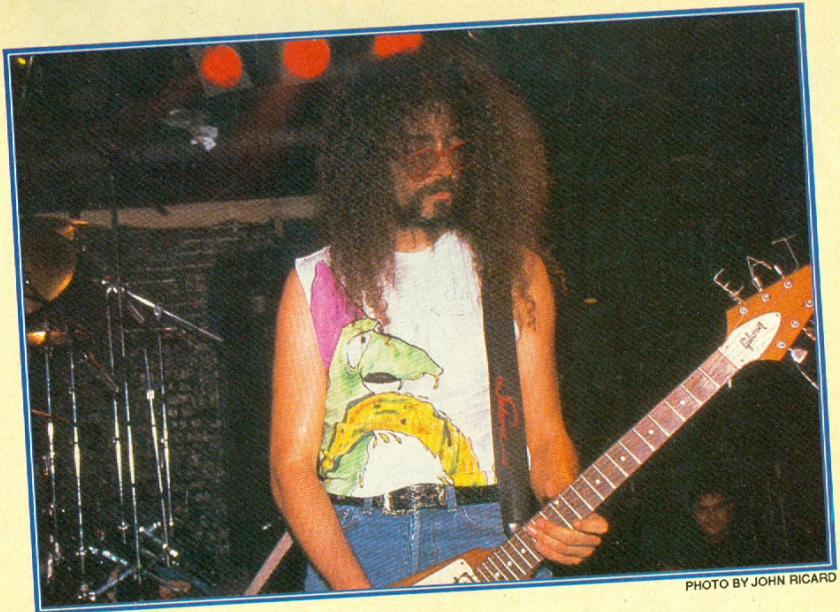


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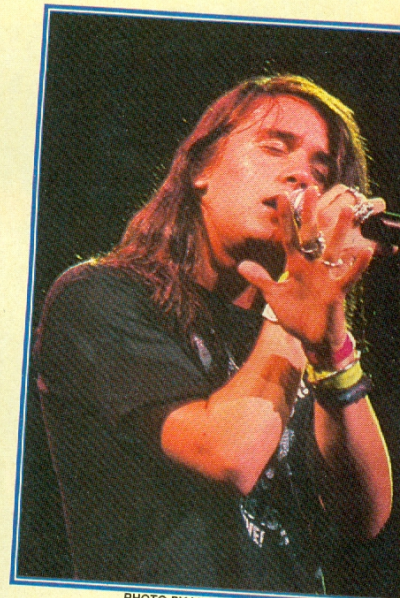


PHOTO BY MARK LEIALOHA/PHOTOFEATURES

who can portray a musician convincingly.

JIM: You ever figure musicians are just trying to raise their kids and pay their rent just like everybody else? I know a lot of people who aren't musicians at all but who are pretty strange. As a matter of fact, just about everyone I've ever met has been very "different." Most people are musicians. Most people can make music. But, why would anyone bother? What makes a musician a musician?

Look, there's a vast difference be-

tween creative and non-creative people....

You're saying musicians share a similarity?

Yes.

Well, I'm saying otherwise. Where we're having a difference is that I don't believe there are non-creative people. It could also be that creative people haven't been taught, and that makes them creative. It's just what people have time for. I think people who get their hair colored are being creative.

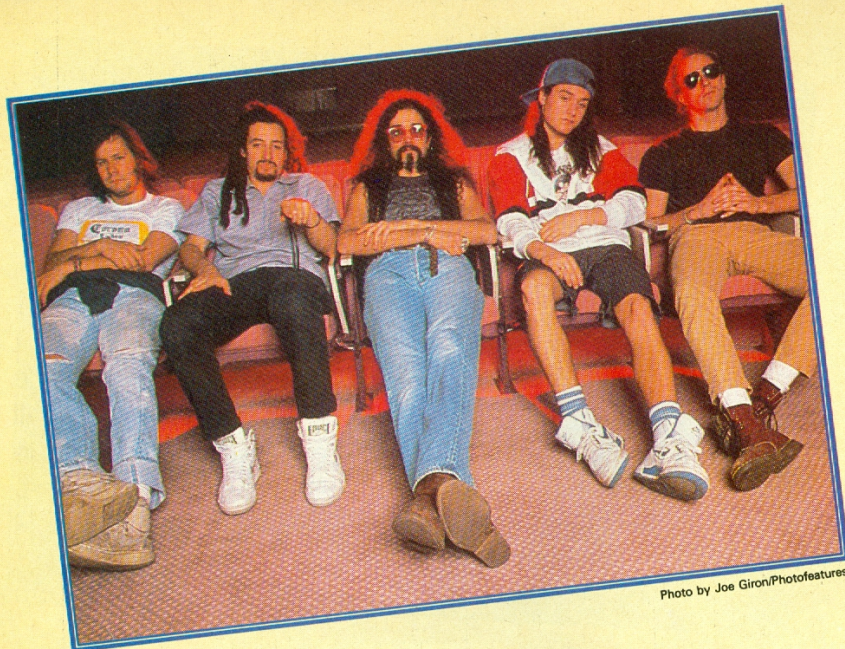


Photo by Joe Gironi/PhotoFeatures



PHOTO BY RICK UKONG/PHOTOFEATURES

You told me earlier that you're a professional musician because you want to make a good living. But if all you wanted out of music was to make money, you would write another pop metal power ballad.

No way! Why would I do that? I don't like that shit. I don't think I could make money doing that, because I don't like it. I don't think I could pull it off.

You can only pull off what you like?

Yeah, yeah. That's all anybody can do, unless they're extremely talented. This is where talent come in. People who are extremely talented can pull off things they don't like and be successful at it. That's a key factor.

(pause) I think we've hit on a profound truth here!

Do you like to practice?

Not really. I like to play stuff, though. I like to figure out songs. I don't like to rehearse.

Do you like the challenge of figuring it out?

Yeah, it's a lot of fun. Like painting a picture. You *like* to paint it, right? Did you ever start off a picture and not know what it's going to be?

Most of the time.

But when you finish, it's something. Then you can change it, and make it more like *that* if you want to.

Yeah, you can also ruin it.

You might ruin it, but someone else would say, "Oh, that's f**kin' great." **Do you care whether other people feel what you have created is good?**

I can whether / feel it's good or not. I'm fully aware that I can do something that I think is shitty, but other people can say that it's great.

How does that make you feel?

I laugh. Because / know it's f**kin' shitty.

Some people get very depressed when that happens, and alienated.

Why. That's pretty stupid. They must be high on drugs.

What's your thing with "drugs?"

It's a huge tool.

A tool for...?

For lots of things. Say you're in pain. You take drugs to take the pain away.

You can become a junkie like that, and create nothing.

Well, you see, people who are doing that are not taking away physical pain, they're trying to take away the pain of their mind. Drugs can't do that for any length of time.

Can music?

For some people.

For you?

Sometimes. It's a joyous thing for me, to create a song. I mean, *if* it ends up working out the way I thought it would.

Exciting?

Very exciting, Gratifying. Although there are some songs I've been working on for years and haven't been able to figure out.

Who do you go about creating a song?

I don't know. Usually, I go and jam with someone, make a tape. And you listen to it later and go "Oh, f**k, that was a cool thing!" Maybe there were two seconds of something good in it... But you think about that for a while and some day, eventually, you're sittin' around somewhere, maybe shooting pool, and all of a sudden you realize that bit would sound good with this other bit you just thought of....

And that doesn't have anything to do with rules, does it?

There are no rules. Things are the way they are, no matter what anybody says. ★



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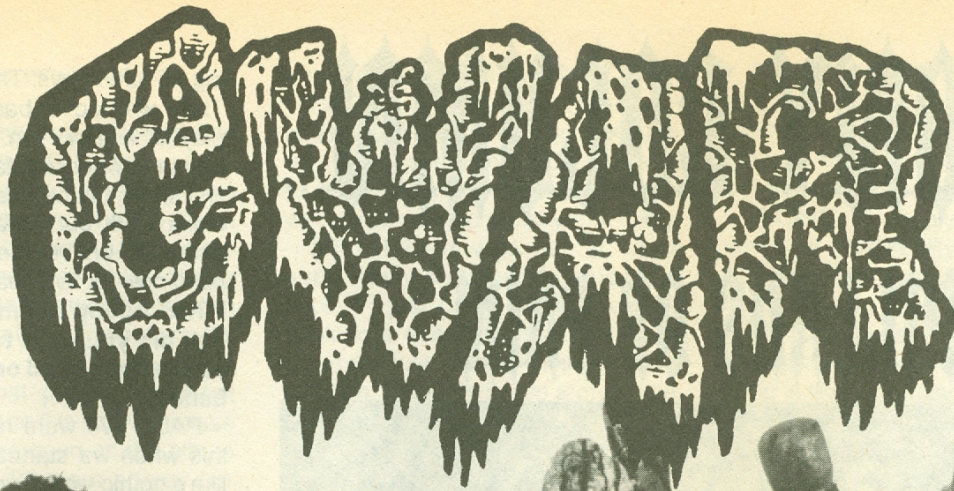
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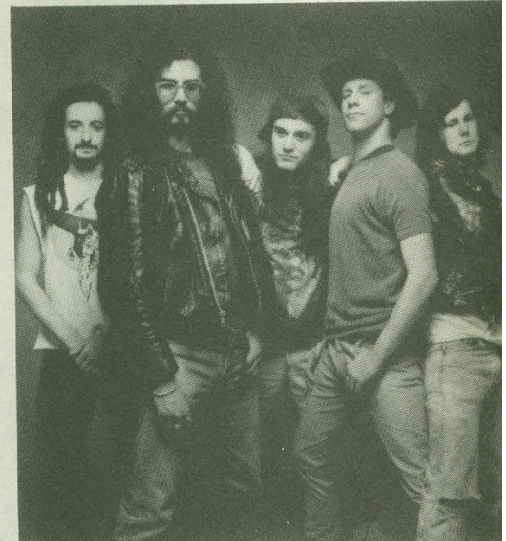


PHOTO BY GLEN LaFERM



By *Belgiorno*

THE FATE OF OUR NATION

Dead On and **Fates Warning**, who have been touring together for the better part of three months, brought their raucous show to Los Angeles' **Country Club** recently to prove there are thrashers south of San Francisco. The members of both bands posed for this shot just after rocking the roof off of the club. In other

tour news, the big fish of 1990 has to be the *Clash Of The Titans* tour, featuring heavyweights **Megadeth**, **Slayer**, **Testament** and **Suicidal Tendencies**. The only problem is that this killer show will take place in Europe! But rest assured that all of the aforementioned bands will be back to stomp through the States (although not necessarily together) in late 1990 and early 1991.

HAVE FAITH

Just when it looked like the pop charts would be safe for wimpy bands like **New Kids On The Block** and **Tiffany** again, along come **Faith No More**, the latest underground group from the Bay Area to see the light of day with the general hordes. At press time the band's album *The Real Thing* was about to break the Top 50 in *Billboard*. The Faith boys are still touring their asses off in support of the LP, which really took off after the video for "Epic" became a staple on —*gulp!*— MTV. Could **Exodus** be next?

TAKING ON THE P.M.R.C.

THRASH METAL INSIDER was all smiles after a copy of *The Roc*, a new, fanzine-type publication intended to take on the powers-that-be at the P.M.R.C., landed on our desks. Publisher **John Woods** really sticks it to the P.M.R.C., outlining the latest developments in the fight against ridiculous new censorship laws that are sprouting across the U.S. like a lethal disease, and even features a target on the cover featuring conservo-nutcases **Tipper Gore**, **Pam Hower**, **Susan Baker** and **Sally Nevius**. For more info on *The Roc*, write to *The Roc*—Rock Out Censorship, c/o Woods, 320 South Cadiz, St., Jewett, Ohio 43986. ★



PHOTO BY GENE AMBO/PHOTOFEATUR

By Harald O

Armed with a brutal, face-shredding new LP, a pounding new drummer and a major new record deal, long-time San Francisco Bay Area thrashers Exodus are set to make a major impact on the ever-expanding thrash scene as they enter a new decade.

THRASH METAL recently talked to guitarist Gary Holt at San Francisco's Alpha-Omega Studios, where he was busy finishing the final mixes of the new EXO-EPIC, *Impact Is Imminent*. The new LP was produced by Gary and fellow guitarist Rick Hunolt, and is the fastest, heaviest stuff they've done since their classic debut album.

Having known Gary for years as a photographer and drinking partner, I felt totally comfortable interviewing him. Gary is a very outgoing, likable person who has incredible conviction in himself and his band. He is by far the most versatile, accomplished guitarist in thrash today, rivaled only by Testament's Alex Skolnick. From his tasty classical pieces to complex,

techno-Egyptian riffs, Gary's playing incorporates many styles.

Gary gave me a track-by-track run-down of the new LP: "The title track and the first song on the album is 'Impact Is Imminent.' It's an anti-drunk-driving song that basically talks about how totally stupid it is to die behind the wheel when there's no need to. The second song is called 'AWOL,' and it's an anti-traitor song, hypothetically based on the Ollie North, Contra Affairs and all this bullshit goin' on. The third song is 'Lunatic Parade,' which is about the story of our lives on the road, the lunatic parade that it is. The fourth song is 'Within The Walls Of Chaos,' which is quite an epic. It's about the whole horror of life inside the ghettos with the crack epidemic and all the gang warfare going on.

"The fifth song is 'Objection Overruled,' which is a very tongue-in-cheek slang on all the silly courtroom drama shows, all the schlock-artist soap opera junk that's flooding TV right now—*People's Court*, *Divorce Court*, *The Judge*, *You the Jury*, all

this bullshit. It's totally stupid, you know? It's one big plague that was spawned by none other than Perry Mason's crappy show.

"Side two opens with 'Heads They Win, Tails You Lose,' which is about the hazards of gambling addiction. It's basically a no-win situation. Next is 'Only Death Decides,' which is my personal favorite. It's about the Day of Retribution, a hypothetical story about someone who has cheated, abused and hurt people all their lives. Then when they die, they aren't happy with discovering they ain't going to heaven, they're going to hell. It's about Judgment Day. Only death decides where you go. Next is 'Changing Of The Guard,' which is about the whole Romanian dictatorship upheaval with the execution of Nicolai Ceucausu, the Berlin Wall going down, all the political reform going on in the Eastern Bloc. The final song is called 'Thrash Under Pressure,' which is about being proud of being a thrash band when it's becoming so uncool to call yourself thrash. You know, just continuing to be a

thrash band under pressure to change and go more mainstream. That's why our new album is by far the most thrash album we've ever done. There's not even anything like 'Metal Command' on this album. It's a total thrash album!! It stings!!"

Having recently completed the MTV *Headbangers Ball* tour with Anthrax and Helloween, I asked Gary if the tour helped their career at all. "It helped a lot!" he assured. "We played in front of a lot of people, and we kicked a lot of people's asses. We didn't just go up and ride on Anthrax's coattails. It doesn't matter how good the headliner is, Exodus never goes over as just an opening band! When we were opening, more often we were called the band impossible to follow up!"

Drummer Tom Hunting (who started Exodus with Kirk Hammett) recently left the band to become a session/studio musician after getting his fill of touring. Anthrax's drum roadie, Johnny Tempesta, has taken over drum duties, and is a worthy successor to Hunting. Johnny makes his debut on the new record, and has already proved himself at some recent local gigs, where he impressed the f**k out of me!!

"We've known him since we toured with him on the *Among The Living* tour and the *Headbangers Ball* tour", Greg explained. So we knew Johnny personally and knew him as a massive drummer just waiting for a good enough gig to give up his job with Charlie. He made good money doing that and wasn't going to go and join just any band."

The Exo-dudes were recently nominated for best metal album by local music mag BAM. Tesla won the Bammie, which is as unfair as Jethro Tull winning over Metallica at the Grammys. I wondered what Gary thought. "It was an honor to be nominated, but no one could expect anybody *but* Tesla to win. Everybody else (Testament, Faith No More and the Sea Hags) is in this up 'n' coming record sales-type league, and then you have Tesla who just went double platinum. I don't consider them a heavy metal band, and don't think they belonged in that category. The nomination was cool because we've

always gotten overlooked for tons of stuff, you know? We get no respect!" (laughs)

Going back, you probably know that Exodus, along with Metallica, forged what has become known as "The Bay Area Sound." I asked Gary if he felt the band didn't get enough credit for being one of the thrash/power metal originators. "Yeah," he copped to it. "Sometimes I get pissed off if I hear us overlooked when somebody's talking about band's who influenced the whole



PHOTO BY GENE AMBO/PHOTOFEATURES

genre. Other bands who get credit were doing covers while we were playing *Bonded by Blood* material. I feel when people hear our albums and see us live, they see something genuine and know where we belong."

Exodus recently played a wild show with Testament, Death Angel and 11 other local metal bands at The Stone in San Francisco. "That was just an opportunity for us to get totally ripped and jam," Gary explains. "We played all cover songs [e.g., Blackfoot's 'Good Morning,' Ted Nugent's 'Free For All,' and AC/DC's 'Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap'], except for a drunken version of 'Brain Dead.'"

Jokingly, I suggested they should record these nuggets. "We recorded the Blackfoot and Nugent tunes for the B-side of our European single. 'Dirty Deeds' won't make it to vinyl, but we'll be playing it live. Joan Jett can beat herself!" (laughs) Joan Jett, of course, recorded "Dirty Deeds" for her last album before Exodus had a chance to put out *their* version.

The Bay Area has become the undisputed thrash capital of the world with Testament, Death Angel, Forbidden and Violence all spearheading the Second Wave of SF Thrash Metal (SWOSFTM). I asked Gary how he felt the local scene has changed through the years. "There's not nearly as much of a thriving club band scene. All the good shows are usually bands coming in from out of town, or the bigger local bands. It's getting better, but it's not what it was like when we were starting out."

I wondered if he missed the old underground scene. "Oh, hell, yeah! I thrived on the violence that went on at the time. Now I'm a little more peaceful, but back then I lived for it! It was the fuel of our lives."

And what about the future? "We're going out with our own production, staging and lighting, for the first time headlining theaters, probably near the end of July. It looks like Suicidal Tendencies will be supporting Exodus on the road in the summer tour, copping rays! After the U.S., we'll be doing the world, including Australia, Japan and the Iron Curtain countries for the first time. Impact is imminent. That's it. When you see it coming, it's too late!" ★



TESTAMENT

By Ivette Ruiz

Music. The universal language. People throughout the centuries have been aware of the magic it contains, transcending all language barriers, cultures and lifestyles, and bringing the world a little closer together. The genre of heavy metal has begun to create its own strangle hold on the worldwide musical system, having long since grasped the attention of Europe and making the region an important factor in any band's success. If a band's music is well-received throughout the continent and a solid fan base is established, North America can be an easier mountain to climb.

These days, the attention of the metal world is being directed toward another part of the globe—The Far East. The recent surge of interest in metal emanating from Asia has caused several thrash bands to venture to The Kingdom of the Sun, per-

PREACHING IN JAPAN

forming their music to overwhelmingly large numbers of young Easterners craving exposure to this powerful entity of Western Music.

Having already conquered the stages throughout the United States on their *Practice What You Preach* tour, Testament are one of the bands bringing their unique brand of thrash to Japan's increasingly hungry horde of metal fans. Guitarist Alex Skolnick talks about what it was like to travel across the world and the different kind of fans they encountered.

"The people over there were great," Alex says. "They were very different. They sit in their seats the whole time and applaud after the shows. It's mostly girls too. In Europe it's the opposite and in the States it's pretty mixed. They're very polite. They really get into the music and into guitar, which is important for me. In Europe they don't seem to notice the guitar that much.

"After the shows, they stand in line for autographs and every single one of them will say 'Excuse me, can I please have your autograph? Thank you.' They take turns. In Europe they'll just push each other out of the way and smother whoever they're trying to get an autograph from."

Alex also mentions the band's mutual surprise at the enthusiastic reception they received, especially from listeners of the female persuasion.

"It was an incredible experience,

PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE



kind of like a fantasy," he said. "Everything happened on time. We were given a lot of gifts. We were constantly being handed gifts. It was Valentine's Day while we were there, and you give men chocolates in Japan on Valentine's Day so we got a lot of those. A lot of them kind of hold you up on a pedestal. Anywhere we went we were recognized. The fans just reacted so wildly. There were girls at the airports, at the train stations, in the hotel lobbies, on the streets, in the clubs, everywhere we went. It was like being the Rolling Stones!"

Along with the obvious attention from their fans came all the interest from Japanese publications and magazines, filling Testament's days with press meetings and photo shoots and ultimately giving the band little time for themselves.

"We really had no time to do anything for amusement," Alex commented. "We were only there ten days and we played all sold-out shows, four in Osaka and three in Tokyo. We had so much press during the rest of the time we didn't really have time to go out and sightsee. The only

sightseeing we did was during photo shoots. We did quite a few of those. We got to see some scenery while we were there. It's a very pretty country, a really nice place."

While on tour in the U.S. for a second time in support of *Practice What You Preach*, Testament encountered fans with open minds and a genuine excitement toward their newest LP, something Alex says wasn't the case the first time around.

"This time the more long term fans have been telling us the album's really grown on them, whereas on the first part of the tour, they really weren't so sure about it. The whole tour we've been talking to and meeting people that have just recently heard this record, and also to a lot of people who have never liked thrash or power metal before."

With all the controversy surrounding their third album, Testament fans seem to be divided, some liking the band's progression others left craving for more of the speed and aggressiveness of their past efforts. Although a certain amount of listeners may have

PHOTO BY JOHN VINSON/ARTIST PUBLICATIONS



been disappointed with *Practice What You Preach*, the band is happy with their current material, seeing it as a statement of their own musical capability.

"The new stuff is a lot more comfortable," Alex says. "Some of our more hardcore fans may not like it as much, but we're not a Slayer-type band, and it was about time for us to prove that we have a lot more going for us musically than most other bands that we're classified with. I think the days of talentless bands are over, and *Practice What You Preach* was the first album where we really got to prove ourselves."

"Take one of our songs," Alex continues. "The 'Ballad,' for example. At first people didn't know what to think, but live it's starting to get one of the best responses and a lot of the older fans have been coming up to us and telling us the more they listen to it, the more they like it and now it's one of their favorites. The stuff that Testament creates is so different. On the



PHOTO BY RICK LIKONG/PHOTOFEATURES



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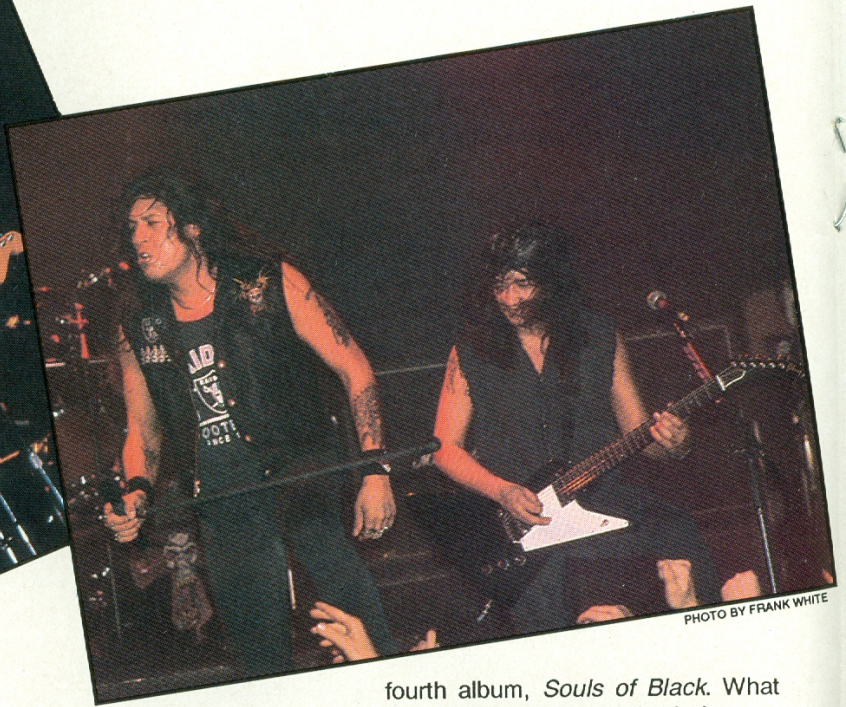


PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE

first album, somebody could take a song like 'Curse of the Legions of Death,' which was written before Chuck and I were even in the band, and that sounds like anything you might hear from any speed metal group and some fans think that that's the type of band we are. They don't even listen to the rest of the stuff like the beginning of 'Burnt Offerings'

where we have that really pretty section. We're that type of band too. We're many different types of bands and capable of a lot of different things and it's unfortunate that some people have to stereotype us and think we can only do one thing. If we still sounded like the first album, I wouldn't be happy."

Testament will make another effort to please themselves as they enter the studio this summer to record their

fourth album, *Souls of Black*. What lies waiting in the wings for their growing legion of fans? Alex doesn't give many clues, but the confidence he personifies is more than apparent.

"I think the next album is going to be rougher, but it's not going to be noisier. People who are expecting more commercial songs are going to be disappointed. People who are expecting Slayer-sounding songs are going to be disappointed as well. I think a lot of people are going to enjoy it and come back for more." ★

THE INVENTIONS OF THE MONSTERS, PART II



PHOTO BY BERTRAND ALARY

By Belgiorno

1990 is a year of reckoning for Anthrax. While the New York quintet threatened to go overground in 1988 and 1989 with their best-selling album ever (*State Of Euphoria*) and an MTV-sponsored tour, over-possessive fans who had followed the guys from the beginning started to grumble something about a sell-out. The band's new album, *The Persistence Of Time*, may do for Anthrax what *...And Justice For All* did for Metallica. But in this exclusive interview for THRASH METAL, the band hardly seems concerned about whether this LP makes them multi-millionaires or not. The music is what matters, and the fact will ring loud and clear as Anthrax prepares to head out for another

awesome tour.

THRASH: Were you surprised when people started yelling "sell out" after *State Of Euphoria* was released?

SCOTT: Yeah, it's always a surprise. I never understand it myself. I don't really hear that much of a difference between our records intensity-wise or heaviness-wise. I mean, there's stuff on *State Of Euphoria* that's heavier than any of the stuff we've done previously. There's also stuff on *State Of Euphoria* that's not as heavy as stuff we've done previously. Maybe people key in on certain things, but there's stuff on "Be All End All" and "Now It's Dark" that I think is heavier than *anything* we've ever done. So it's always a surprise, but that's the way fans are. I'm a fan

of a lot of bands, and I'm guilty of the exact same thing with bands that I'm into. You hear one thing you don't like, and you're immediately like "What the f**k did they do that for? How come it doesn't sound like the last album?" But you can't stay the same. You can't put out the same record every year. It's just impossible, because you're not the same person every year or year-and-a-half. Things change in your life, things change in your attitude. The way you hear things changes, and the way you're writing.

DAN: There's also a lot of fans that don't want to see you get to a certain level. They want to keep you at that same place where you played in their town. Every year they want you to come by. It's their band. It's not thousands of people's band, it's *their*

band.

Has Anthrax ever discussed doing a live album?

We would put out another video rather than just a live record, 'cause at least that way you get both. All a live album usually is, is you usually hear a crowd and the songs are a little bit faster. At least with a video, you can see what's going on.

Are the lyrics on the new album still socially and politically concerned?

Yeah. Nothing's really changed as far as that goes. All the songs are about real life. There's nothing really even based on Stephen King stuff this time around! *(laughs)* Everything is real life. There's two songs about racism, "Keep It In The Family" and "Hatred." "Keep It In The Family" is about this specific incident in New York, in Brooklyn, last summer when this kid got shot by these white guys. The song "Hatred" has a broader spectrum about it. It's just about not wasting your time hating somebody because they're different.

The song "Discharge" is the other side of the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. They really glamorize it a lot in the magazines and MTV. That whole lifestyle seems to get glamorized, and it's really not a glamorous lifestyle.

The lyrics to this song really show the other side of it. "One Man Stand" was totally inspired by the picture of that guy standing in front of the tanks in China in Tianamen Square.

The more I think about it now, with all the shit that's going on now with the stickering and the record labeling and the censorship—I wish I would have been thinking about it more at the time I was writing, 'cause I've got some really good ideas about that. I was even thinking about writing a couple of paragraphs in the liner notes about what's going on. It is censorship. Our government is focusing so much attention on what's going on in Eastern Europe, yet they're passing these censorship laws here in the United States and it doesn't make any sense. The Berlin Wall comes down, and yet kids aren't going to be able to go out in the U.S. and buy a record that they want to buy. They're telling us what we should be able to listen to and what we should be able to read and what we should be able to see. That's wrong.

Have you seen any of the darker sides of the music industry in the past five years?

SCOTT: We never have a problem, really. We've always run things our-

selves. To this day it's still us and our management, Johnny and Marcia Z. We pretty much dictate how everything goes. I mean, from the writing and making of the records to all the promotion and everything. We don't want to let it out to other people, because nobody else know what we want. Nobody else is in the band. There are people who are close to us who we can trust with the responsibility, but the ideas are still coming from us, and that's how we've kept it safe. We've never really gotten f**ked that way.

Do you plan to be out on the road for a long time in support of this album?

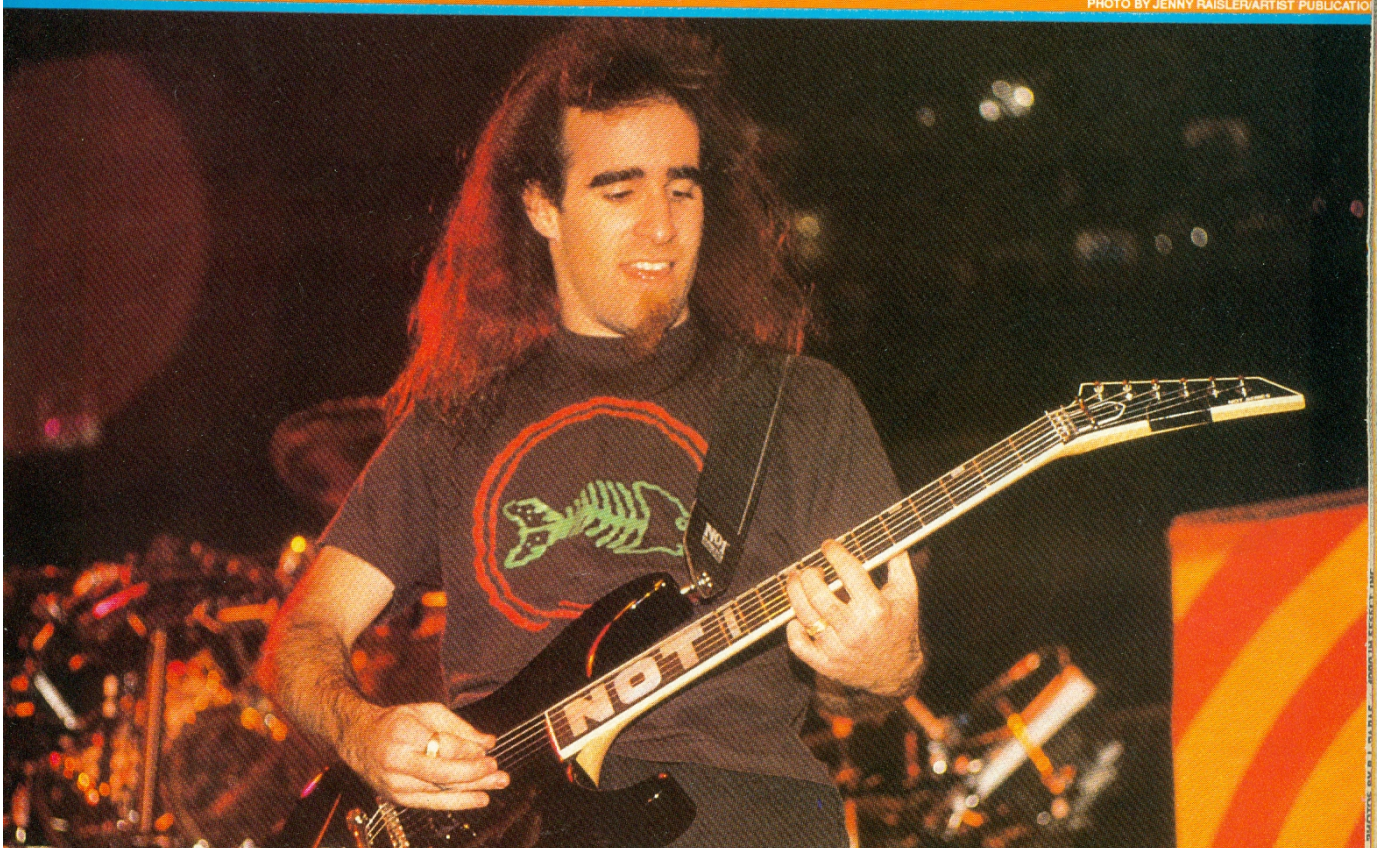
SCOTT: We want to be. That's the way we have to do it, you know?

DAN: We don't get played on the radio and we don't get played on MTV, and it's what we like to do anyway. I mean, the travelling sucks, but that two hours or hour-and-a-half onstage—that's it.

Do you prefer playing live to recording in the studio?

SCOTT: Yeah, definitely. It's cool making a record, but you don't have 18,000 kids yelling at you when you record it! ★

PHOTO BY JENNY RAISLER/ARTIST PUBLICATION



L.A. SCENE

HEART OF THE BEAST

By Dwayne Wallace

As a large metropolis, Los Angeles is not known for producing an abundance of thrash music. It probably has to do with the fact that the rest of the country doesn't take L.A. seriously. After all, the city is pretty much known as the glam Capitol of the world. Everybody thinks that metal bands out here just want to put on make-up and shake their asses to make a buck.

I'm going to prove people wrong. L.A.'s thrash scene is alive and well, and it could be just a matter of time before the City of Angels becomes as well-known for thrash as its neighboring city San Francisco. After all, Metallica started here before they



PHOTO BY MARK LEIALOHA/PHOTOFEATURES

The *Clash Of The Titans* tour, one of the major tours scheduled for Europe this fall, will feature three L.A. bands. Due to kick off in late September, the tour's line-up consists of Megadeth, Slayer, Testament and Suicidal Tendencies.

After a long break, **Megadeth** will finally be back this year. The new, re-formed Megadeth will feature the two Daves (Mustaine and Ellefson) as well as Marty Friedman on guitar and Nick Menza on drums. A new album is due on September 10, and so far the band has no plans to play any U.S. dates before they head out to Europe to co-headline the *Titans* tour with Slayer.

Speaking of the almighty **Slayer** (who I consider to be the best speed metal act ever), the band headed into the studio in late June to record the follow-up to *South Of Heaven*, tentatively titled *Seasons In The Abyss*. The LP will feature songs about Taimanen Square ("Blood Red"), the original psycho killer Ed Gein ("Dead Skin Mask"), L.A. gangs ("Expandable Youth") and a schizophrenic mass murderer ("Seasons In The Abyss"). It's guaranteed to please all Slayer fans.

When asked who he considered to be some of the top up-and-coming acts from L.A., Slayer bassist Tom Araya suggested that people check out Harum Scarum and Comatose,

Dark Angel, L.A.'s own caffeine machine, recently released an EP called *Live Scars* and are currently writing material for their next full-length album. After over a year of extensive touring, the band will be taking a short break. Expect the new LP around the beginning of 1991.

After not playing in their hometown of Los Angeles (except for a showcase gig) for nearly five years, it finally looks like **Suicidal Tendencies** will get a chance to play in the area. Their superb new album *Lights, Camera... Revolution* is a real aggressive release that will most likely give the Suicidals the recognition they deserve. Perhaps the bad press (or lack of press) on the band has turned off potential new fans, but if you haven't checked these guys out you should. You'll be surprised at what you've been missing.

There's also quite a few unsigned bands that are making waves in the local thrash scene. **Murdercar** is one of the top acts in Los Angeles right now. Unfortunately, due to legal problems it may be a while before we see vinyl on the band, but if you ever have a chance to get one of their demos or see them live I'd highly recommend it.

Harum Scarum, the band Tom Araya mentioned, are currently recording a demo to shop around in search of label interest. After hearing

pressed. Pat, the drummer extraordinaire, will blow your mind, and when their demo hits the streets it shouldn't take long for the band to sign a record deal.

I also recently saw **Sanctum**, and these guys are f**kin' hot. The band is set to release an EP of their progressive thrash soon, but at the moment they're just playing around the L.A. area and working up some new songs.

MX Machine is a power metal

group that has built up a large following in this area. Their "No glam fags" approach has become as popular as American apple pie, and extensive fanzine support and a number of releases suggest this is a band that's going places.

Anti-Nuclear Death is another band that has built a huge following in the Southern California area. They've opened for such acts as M.O.D., D.R.I., Death Angel, King Diamond, Danzig, Destruction, Cro-

Mags and Uncle Slam, and easily draw 300 people to their own shows, even on short notice. The band has a new demo that is a must for those who like their music to hit them in the face like a Mack truck.

Evil Dead, who are signed to Roadracer Records, have been playing L.A. for quite some time. Now they're ready to break out of SoCal and explore the greener pastures of the U.S., and hope that after their next album they'll land an opening spot on a major tour. We'll see.

For metal, L.A.'s cream of the crop is its hardcore scene. The top act right now has to be **Excel**, who have built a sizable following since their first album. If you're a pit monger, Excel is for you—they generate some of the best pits I've ever been in. If you're curious about L.A. hardcore you've gotta check these guys out. They definitely put out some ass-kickin' music.

Of course, there's a very fine line between hardcore and thrash. People seem to be scared of the hardcore tag, but in all reality it's almost the same as any other metal. Don't let the word "hardcore" fool you—it is just as powerful and progressive as any other type of metal out there.

Which brings us to **Uncle Slam**, a band that features two ex-members of Suicidal Tendencies. This is yet another band ready to break out of the Southern California area. With a hot debut album (*Say Uncle*) under their belts, Uncle Slam is currently shopping around for a new label.

Though the L.A. death metal scene has been pretty dry the last couple of years, since bands like Sepultura have hit the U.S. a lot of high-quality death metal acts have emerged in Los Angeles, ready to make a dent in a scene that has been mostly dominated by Florida.

Recipients Of Death is an L.A.-based band that has become an underground favorite with tape traders. Their first album featured some guitarwork from Eric Meyer of Dark Angel and was produced by him as well. A second album, also produced by Eric, should be available by the time you read this.

Sarcastic recently headlined the



PHOTO BY PETE CRONIN/PHOTOFEATURES

Country Club, no small feat when you consider the size of the venue (900 capacity) and the fact that these guys have only been together since November of 1989. They also had an opening slot on the coroner bill. Sarcastic is very death and very hot. They even play a flawless cover of a Sepultura song in their set, and would be perfect to open up for that band when they return to the states.

Some other bands worth mentioning: **Sadistic Intent**, another L.A. death metal band that has been signed to Wild Rags Records; **Comatose**, whose heavy thrash has a real Brazilian sound that is raw and powerful; **Ahaxe**, whose sound is very much like Testament's with some slower guitarwork and who have already opened for such acts as Anthrax, Testament, Death Angel and King Diamond.

If you'd like more information on these bands, watch for *Metaldose Video Magazine*, a new compilation put together by Jerry Allen of Metallian Productions in association with *Metaldose*, an L.A.-based fanzine that regularly features local bands. The videotape will feature many of the bands in this article, with exclusive live footage and interviews. If you're interested in obtaining a copy of the video or the current issue of *Metaldose*, write to: *Metaldose*, P.O. Box 2344, Buena Park, Calif., 90621 or Jerry Allen, c/o Metallian Productions, P.O. Box 167, Venice, Calif., 90291 for more info. ★

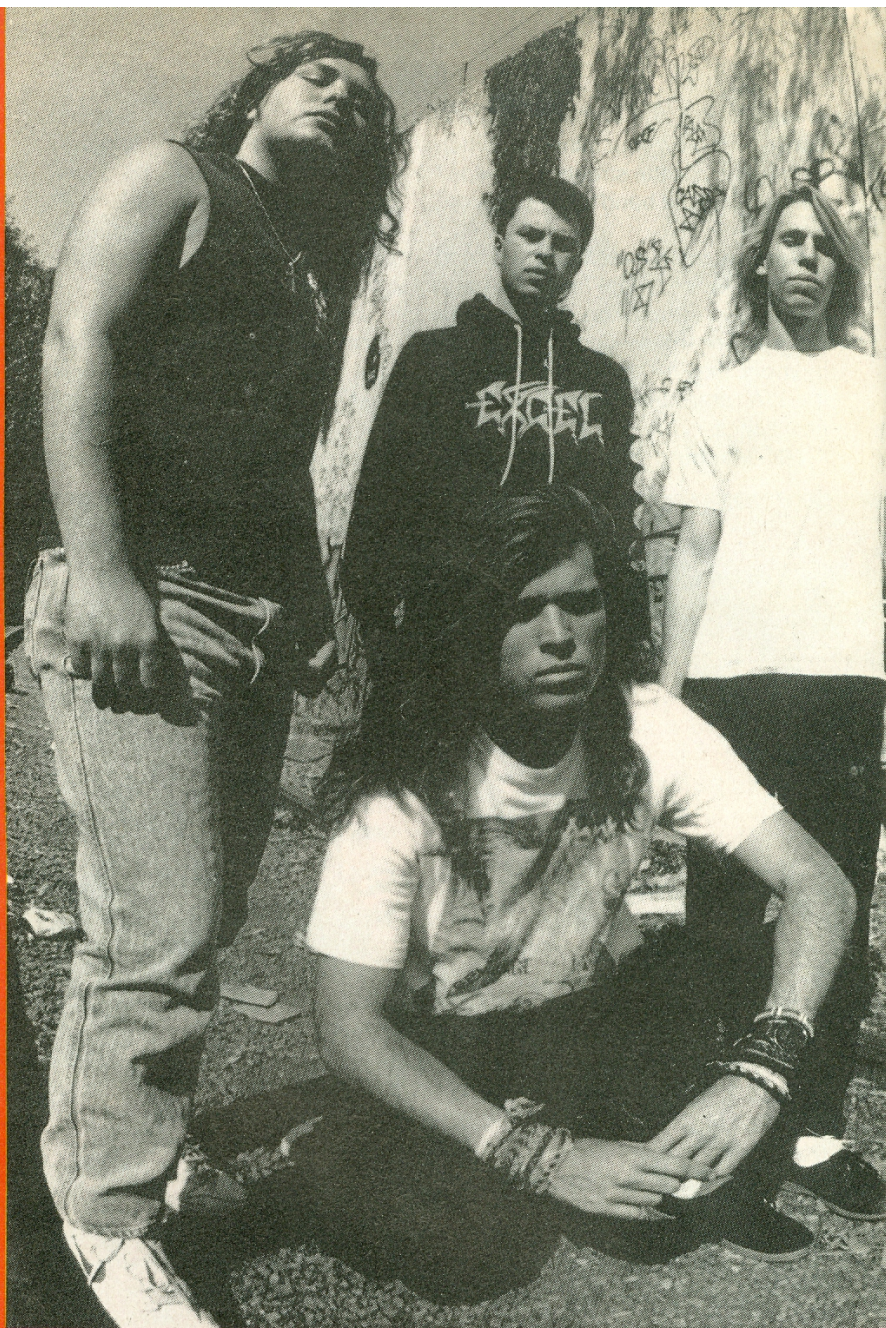


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AGONY COLUMN

PILLARS OF PAIN



By Dwayne Wallace

Hotter than the Texas sun from under which they hail, Agony Column is becoming one of the most popular variety metal bands to come out in some time. They have a style that is hard to describe, mixing speed metal riffs with rockabilly backbeats to create a unique sound that has yet to be duplicated. Right now Agony Column is ready to release their new album *Brave Words and Bloody Knuckles*, which will be followed by a U.S. tour with Gwar. We recently talked with Richie Turner, Stuart Lawrence and Paul Willis to discuss their history and future plans.

THRASH: How did Agony Column form and who came up with the name?

RICHIE: Well, me and Stuart met at Mr. Gaddy's and we were both in previous bands at that time. We did some four-track tapes, just me and him. I wrote "Agony Column" on one of the tapes. I found the name while reading an issue of *Cosmopolitan* magazine. I kind of researched a little further and found out they were the first personal columns printed in the late 1800s in England. I kind of used it as a joke name on these tapes we did together. Later on we decided to make it a real band.

PAUL: Basically they started look-

ing for other guys. They came to me. They wanted a bass player, so I played bass for them. We had another drummer when we started playing our first show, but he wasn't very good. It didn't work out. Charlie came right after that. We've been together as a band now for five years.

When Agony Column first started out, did you want to be perceived as a serious band or more of a joke band?

PAUL: We were not anything like this when we started out. We were like a gothic—have you ever heard of the Sisters Of Mercy or the Birthday Party or Scratch Acid? Death rock bands. We weren't even a heavy metal band really. It was real heavy sounding.

Now you categorize your music as "hellbilly death metal"...

PAUL: It's just like what we call it. We are not really a death metal band. We are a hellbilly band.

Who came up with hellbilly?

It just kind of came out. We started playing those metal-country-rockabilly songs. One of the first songs Stuart and Richie wrote together was kind of a rockabilly song. It was "Scarred For Life" actually, off the first album. We started to do other songs like that, and it's like rockabilly metal. We *are* from-Texas.

STUART: We just came up with that term. It's like hellbilly seemed to fit, but we kind of moved away from that though. The next album has less rockabilly-beat stuff.

PAUL: We have been together a long time. We were like a gothic band and country band almost, speed metal band.

So Agony Column is like the 31 Flavors of metal?

STUART: That's right, the Baskin and Robbins of heavy metal.

RICHIE: When we started, we were up for anything. We wanted to do something that would please us and the audience at the same time. I think we've come to that point.

Who writes the lyrics, and what inspires them?

RICHIE: I write the lyrics. I suppose a lot of my inspiration comes from my past and things that have gone on in my life recently. I probably have a lot of influences, everything from other

music to drugs, emotional pain and suffering.

Do you do anything different live than what's on the album?

PAUL: Not really. Basically, we record the albums live. The first album was recorded in like four days. Maybe six, I don't remember. *Brave Words And Bloody Knuckles* was recorded in four days and mixed in two days. It's all live.

RICHIE: Most people comment that they enjoy the live show because it sounds just as good as the album and there is a lot more energy because you are seeing us.

Tell me about some of the new material you're working on.

RICHIE: We just recently mastered our new album...it should be released sometime this summer. As soon as I get home and finish writing the lyrics.

PAUL: It's about half old stuff and half new stuff. Some of the music is actually older than the first album.
is there going to be a cover on the next album?

RICHIE: Yes. We're doing "Mississippi Queen."
What do you have to say about

some of the new songs?

RICHIE: The title track of the album is "Brave Words And Bloody Knuckles." Stuart came up with this book he found in the library. It was how to start your own skinhead racist youth gang.

STUART: It was like a white supremacy network how-to-do-it book... I just could not believe this book was even in the library! Real bizarre. I just started thinking about that title. I thought it was a great title, so I told Richie "Hey, you have to write a song to this title."

RICHIE: Actually, all the lyrics are about how fighting is the last thing you should do. There is always going to be somebody who can kick your ass. You cry "Death before dishonor," but first it's brave words and bloody knuckles. It might sound like a song that encourages fighting—kind of actually does when we play it live—but in actuality it is just the opposite. A lot of songs I write are like that, you know. This is the way it is sometimes, and not necessarily the way it ought to be.

So your lyrics are based on more reality-type subjects than fantasy?

RICHIE: Yeah, sometimes they are, and sometimes they're kind of fantasy also. I mix both.

Do you think it keeps the listener off-guard as far as what to expect?

RICHIE: Probably. Sometimes it could be hard reality, like "66 Guns For Satan" or "God, Guns And Guts." That's a song about all the problems I had with drugs. I quit drugs, but it was like fighting the devil, so that song is like a fantasy portrayal of my fight against drugs. It has a twisted poetry in there along with it. I think a lot of the lyrics I wrote for the first album were inspired by stuff I was going through at the time.

If I try to give any message through my lyrics, it is usually positive, like "Hey, life is tough and it can be really scary, almost like a horror show sometimes, but the thing is to work through it." You are not the only one who sees this. I see it too. That's why it comes out in our music. For all the stuff I write about, I kind of wish that I had more positive messages to give. But if I can do it through an interview or whatever, then maybe that is the way to do it. ★

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ANNIHILATOR



NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN

By Daina Darzin

It's like I fell asleep and woke up on the set of *Twin Peaks*. Well, actually, I'm at the Lake View Motor Inn, a swell place with flower bushes surrounding its little pool and a distinctly woodsy, Northwesterly/70's vibe to its furnishings. Jimmy Swaggart's on the tee vee and the cute coffee shop features the best homemade cinnamon rolls in the history of the universe. Sheriff's deputies are gathered around a table wit' them rolls and a cup o' joe.

Welcome to lovely Vancouver, B.C.

(No, it's not all like this. The mall within walking distance down the highway is like, well, your basic nice mall. Downtown Vancouver is entirely cosmopolitan, but more about that later.) Annihilator's intrepid managers Gary Taylor and Peter Karroll have invited press folk to preview *Never, Neverland*, the much-ballyhooed progressive metal band's new disc.

THE LISTENING PARTY

Ensnared in a pleasant studio — pool table, MTV and Galaga to entertain the troops, K.D. Lang and Skinny Puppy posters on the walls to note

former occupants — folks from the management office and college radio munch on brie and fruit and wait for the studio space to get set up. We have to hurry, everyone's saying. Queensryche's got the studio booked for right after Annihilator. We finally enter, single file, and perch below the hanging blow-up whale. The disc booms from the speakers. From the first note, you can tell this way, way beyond your typical hyper wall-of-noise thrash. Annihilator's music is full of grandeur and imagination and melody above the heavy crunch, all



heavily influenced by [the scene there],” says Jeff. “Younger bands out of there tend to sound the same. Vancouver’s good, ’cause there’s hardly any thrash here at all.” What there are, are strip bars, which is where we go later that evening in a trek that re-defines the term “sightseeing.”

THE STRIP BARS

Vancouver is the acknowledged strip bar capital of the world. Add3 the fact that superproducer Bruce Fairbairn lives there, and Vancouver has also become *the* hot up-and-coming place for recording. Aerosmith, Motley Crue and Bon Jovi all came up here. David Lee Roth has rented the entire floor of a sleazebag hotel called Nelson’s; the Annihilator guys point it out to be as we drive by. Actually, Dave and bassist Wayne Darley (and their friend and management dude, Avelino Valoma) are giving me a complete tour of the city’s decadence. “Hotel California, that’s an old man’s bar. We’re entering the transvestite area,” explains Wayne. Except it’s still light out, and there aren’t any. “Where are all the transvestites?” Dave yells to a cab driver. Without missing a beat, the cabbie points west.

Strip bar #1: Cecil’s is a pleasant enough place, with a sports bar vibe. The Annihilator girlfriends and I are

the only women in the joint, except for the strippers, who are mostly young, pretty, trained in dance. All of them end their act by sitting in this little fountain in front of the stage. The last one does this to Cinderella’s “Long Cold Winter.” There’s a punchline in there somewhere. “Sometimes I forget where I am,” Coburn muses, “and then I look around and think, ‘Oh, God, she’s *naked*...’”

Joint #2, the Penthouse, is the oldest surviving club in Vancouver. It’s been around since Prohibition, and has a sort of sleazebag, CBGBs-type charm. “I used to be a band here,” manager Gary Taylor recalls. “The hookers and gamblers and gangsters would come and hang in the ’60s.” Appropriately, the Doors “Strange Days” is playing. The girls here are mostly skanky and look at the crowd with a numb stare. Here, there are tons of women in the audience. They are, of course, hookers.

On our way out, we pass a gardeners’ pick-up filled with tools. “There’s what you’re gonna tour in,” laughs Gary Taylor. “So you can do odd jobs on the side.” Avelino’s car has to get a push in order to start. “It’s more of a challenge,” Gary adds. “Probably better for the ozone layer, too.” It’s late now, and girls are on every street corner. Actually, they

look kinda heavy metal, much like the regulars who hang at the Cat Club in New York or Cathouse in L.A. Are those bimbos or hookers? I ask the guys.

“Hookers,” Dave insists. “How much for all of us?” he calls out to one of them.

“You have a girl there,” the red-haired number says, inspecting our car.

“That’s okay,” says Dave, seeing how far he can push it. Not that far. The girls can spot a non-serious customer a mile away.

CLUB SODA

It’s the only real happenin’ club in town, having a rip-roaring, sardine-crowded Saturday night. “Looks like Mich Mars, eh?” two guys joke, pointing to a rather homely metal girl. (No stereotype. They do say “eh” a lot in Canada...) People are bopping on the dance floor to The Cult’s “She Sells Sanctuary.” There’s a bulletin board full of autographed photos of stars and would-be stars.

Dave and Wayne immediately zero in on some bimbos. The acknowledged party dudes of the bunch, they’ll go on to a private party and keep on rockin’ till dawn, while the rest of the crew are starting to think about calling it a night.

A purely dreadful band whose lead singer wears the most ripped-up ripped jeans I’ve ever seen, makes their entrance in a cloud of smoke machine smoke, as if that will make them sound more big-time. Most people don’t pay any attention to them. They’re here to dance and socialize. A very dressed-down Rikki Rockett (Poison also record here) is hanging out with some friends, relatively incognito. The many neon signs glow, the beer flows freely (also not a stereotype, they like beer in Vancouver).

A scene that’s at once Annihilator’s style, and also far from it. This is rock ‘n’ roll’s mundane present, and they’re emphatically its future. Even though they’re determined Vancouver natives, their music’s up there with the coolest, most innovative stuff that New York or L.A. has to offer. “We’re pretty heavy for this town,” says Wayne. An understatement if there ever was one. ★

held together by Jeff Waters' remarkable guitar work. A nerdy-looking member of the college radio contingent is just about knocking himself out playing air guitar, but everyone else in the room is blown away, too.

"There's a wide variety on the record," Waters understates. "A lot of different changes and melodic stuff — parts that might be deemed commercial, parts that are thrash." Lyrically, it covers everything from nuclear destruction to macaroni and cheese. (Literally.) Touring with Onslaught and Testament to support their *Alice In Hell* debut sharpened Annihilator's chops, and ex-Omen vocalist Coburn Pharr (replacing Randy Rampage) adds more technically capable pipes to the mix. The consensus is, the disc's a winner, and that's not just because the band and their managers are standing around, watching our reactions. The band's hot to go out on the road again. Which brings us to...

THE REHEARSAL

It's a space that might be familiar

as the concert-shots locale for the "Alison Hell" video: the Paramount, a cheerfully garish renovated movie theatre decorated in various shades of purple and hot pink, with a black and white checkerboard floor.

Second guitarist Dave Davis and drummer Ray Hartman are running through a Jimmy Buffet-ish southern-breezes number and some classical chords. Eventually, Jeff and Coburn arrive and the ensemble starts ripping through "Alison Hell." A potential tour bus irritant becomes apparent right away: Jeff likes to play with a cigarette hanging from his mouth; Coburn quit smoking after a relative of his died a horrible death of lung cancer, and is now decidedly anti-smoking.

"That's a nice Concrete Marketing shirt you're wearing," he tells me during the break, adding sarcastically about the metal management company, "They love me. I was once in their office with a couple of guys who pissed in the corner of their office and then told them I did it..." That event later had business repercussions for

Coburn, an affable guy who manages to come off funny and outgoing *and* intense, at the same time.

"I got something to prove to myself with this band," he says later. "I want to impress my peers, because no one takes me very seriously, when in fact I'm very serious."

This is rehearsal, though, and he's cracking everyone up, singing the gloomy lyrics with a big smile and playing to his girlfriend Amy, who works in the management office.

There's a mirror ball on the ceiling indicating the many different kinds of music that gets booked in there. Vancouver doesn't have much of a scene; everybody says so. Most of the bands are Top 40; up to now, the folks that have really made it are radio-rockers like Loverboy or Bryan Adams. Annihilator is the biggest and more or less only original metal band in Vancouver. They like it here, though. "It's such a nice area, if you like lakes and mountains and skiing. Plus if I moved to L.A. or San Francisco when I was nineteen, my music would have been

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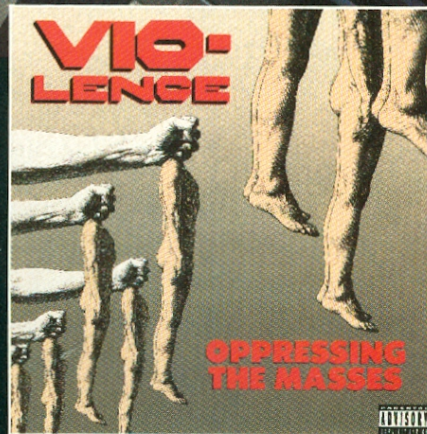
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